REMARKS

The non-final Office Action was issued on pending claims 1-17. Claims 1, 2, 5-7 and 14 stand rejected, and claims 3, 4, 8-13 and 15-17 were withdrawn from consideration. In this Response, claims 1, 2, 5-7 and 14 have been amended, claim 18 has been added and no claims have been cancelled. Thus, claims 1-18 are pending in the application, of which claims 1, 2, 5-7, 14 and 18 are under consideration and claims 3, 4, 8-13 and 15-17 are withdrawn from consideration.

Applicant invites the Examiner to call Applicant's Representative to discuss any issues with this application.

Allowable Claims

The Office Action at page 5 states that claims 2, 5-7 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the notice of allowable claims.

Specification Objections

At page 2 of the Office Action, the abstract and specification were objected to for informalities. The specification has been amended to correct the informalities. The specification has been amended to change "communicated to" to "in communication with." Also, a revised abstract is enclosed which corrects informalities in the abstract. The specification amendments and revised abstract are supported by the application as originally filed and no new subject matter has been added.

Applicant submits the specification objections have been overcome.

Claim Objections

At page 3 of the Office Action claim 5 was objected to as containing informalities. In response, claim 5 has been amended to correct the informalities by deleting the reference number 3.

Thus, Applicant submits that the claim objections have been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112

The Office Action at pages 3 and 4 rejects claims 1, 2, 5-7 and 14 under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph.

Claims 1, 2, 5-7 and 14 have been amended to clarify the claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "the string inserted into the third passage hole is located between the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces and is held by the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces." Accordingly, claim 1 more clearly reads on Species I. Amended claim 1 may also be generic to other Species.

Similar to the specification amendments, the claims have been amended to change "communicated to" to "in communication with."

The claims have also been amended to clarify the elastic leg pieces.

Thus, Applicant submits that the rejections should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

At pages 4 and 5 of the Office Action claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Holmberg (US 5,924,178). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 1 pertains to a string fixing device and calls for "a plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces extending from the plug body." Holmberg simply does not have a plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces extending from the plug body. Rather, Holmberg shows a spring 13 pushing a front slide 11 and a rear slide 12 apart from each other.

Further, claim 1 calls for "the string inserted into the third passage hole is located between the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces and is held by the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces." Holmberg has a hole 22 through a casing 10 for a shoelace when the rear slide 12 is slid against the spring 13. See Fig. 5. Holmberg also has holes 16, 17 which are aligned for the shoelace when the front slide 11 is slid against the spring 13. See Fig. 6. Nowhere does Holmberg show, describe or suggest that it has a plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces in which the string inserted into the third passage hole is located between the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces and is held by the plurality of elastically deformable leg pieces.

Thus, Applicant submits that the rejection should be withdrawn.

New Claim

Claim 18 has been added and is similar to claim 1. Claim 18 reads on Species I and is generic to other Species. Applicant submits claim 18 is fully supported by the application as originally filed. Furthermore, Applicant submits claim 18 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the patent application is in condition for allowance and requests a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Respectfully submitted,

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